

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A communication system for communicating messages between an aircraft and an operations center, comprising:
  - a portable control and display unit;
  - an Aircraft Communication and Reporting System (ACARS) transceiver located on the aircraft to send and receive (1) a data link message communication by the control and display unit; (2) a voice communication by the control and display unit; and (3) a video communication by the control and display unit; and
  - a peripheral device located on the aircraft;
  - wherein the portable control and display unit utilizes the ACARS transceiver to send and receive at least one of the aforementioned communications.
2. The communication system according to claim 1, wherein the control and display unit transmits data messages.
3. The communication system according to claim 2, wherein the data messages can be transmitted while in flight.
4. The communication system according to claim 1, wherein the control and display unit transmits a voice communication.
5. The communication system according to claim 4, wherein the voice communication can be transmitted while in flight.
6. The communication system according to claim 1, wherein the control and display unit transmits a real-time video and single frames.
7. The communication system according to claim 6, wherein the real-time video and single frames can be transmitted while in flight.
8. The communication system according to claim 6, wherein the real-time video is streaming video and single frames.
9. The communication system according to claim 1, wherein the control and display unit functions as a cell phone.
10. The communication system according to claim 1, further comprising a SATCOM antenna.
11. The communication system according to claim 10, wherein the ACARS transceiver switches to the SATCOM antenna when a VHF radio is not communicating.
12. The communication system according to claim 1, wherein the ACARS transceiver transmits and receives a signal over an existing data network.

13. The communication system according to claim 1, wherein the control and display device controls at least one of the movement and the functions of the peripheral device.

14. The communication system according to claim 13, wherein the peripheral device is a camera.

15. The communication system according to claim 14, wherein the control and display unit controls the camera movement.

16. The communication system according to claim 13, wherein the peripheral device is located in a cockpit of the aircraft.

17. The communication system according to claim 13, wherein the peripheral device is located in a cabin of the aircraft.

18. The communication system according to claim 1, further comprising a panic button located in or on the aircraft.

19. The communication system according to claim 1, wherein the messages are encrypted.

20. A method for communicating messages with a control and display unit in an airborne aircraft and controlling a peripheral device within the aircraft using a portable control and display device, comprising:

sending and receiving a data link message by the control and display unit;

sending and receiving a voice communication by the control and display unit;

sending and receiving a video communication by the control and display unit; and

obtaining the video communication from a peripheral device located in or on the plane controlled by the control and display unit.

21. The method according to claim 20, wherein the control and display unit sends and receives the messages to an operations center and receives messages from the operations center.

22. The method according to claim 20, wherein the control and display unit sends and receives the messages to and from another control and display unit in the aircraft.

23. The method according to claim 20, wherein the control and display unit sends and receives positional information concerning the location of the aircraft while airborne.

24. The method according to claim 23, wherein the positional information further comprises data regarding other aircrafts in the vicinity.

25. The method according to claim 20, wherein the control and display unit sends and receives a sensor condition input from a physical contact.

26. The method according to claim 25, wherein the physical contact further comprises at least one of a panic button, fire detection and door contacts.

27. The method according to claim 20, wherein the video communication further comprising displaying a streaming video.

28. The method according to claim 20, wherein the video communication further comprising selecting a video frame to be transmitted to an operations center.